

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

MA ANIMATION

Faculty of Creative Arts
September 2009 - Revised Nov 2010 (Change of field for modules)

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Number*****Part One – Programme Specification**

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Programme Specification

Section 1: Basic Data

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| Awarding institution/body | University of the West of England, Bristol |
| Teaching institution | University of the West of England, Bristol |
| Faculty responsible for programme | Faculty of Creative Arts |
| Programme accredited by | Not applicable |
| Highest award title | MA Animation |
| Default award title | |
| Interim award title | PGDip Media (Animation) PGCert Media (Animation) |
| Modular Scheme title (if different) | Postgraduate Programme Modular Scheme |
| UCAS code (or other coding system if relevant) | |
| Relevant QAA subject benchmarking group(s) | Art and Design |
| On-going/valid until* (*delete as appropriate/insert end date) | |
| Valid from (insert date if appropriate) | September 2008 revised- name change from September 2009 |
| Authorised by...University Q & S Committee | Date:...13 July 2009 |

Version Code

6

For coding purposes, a numerical sequence (1, 2, 3 etc.) should be used for successive programme specifications where 2 replaces 1, and where there are no concurrent specifications. A sequential decimal numbering (1.1; 1.2, 2.1; 2.2 etc) should be used where there are different and concurrent programme specifications

Section 2: Educational aims of the programme

General aims of the postgraduate modular scheme

- to become the recognised West/South West regional centre for postgraduate study and research in Art, Media and Design;
- to create a portfolio of postgraduate awards that reflects the developing needs of Bristol as a centre for the creative, cultural and media production industries;
- to establish clear links between staff and student research, teaching and learning;
- to create programmes of study which are sympathetic to the needs and interests of international students.
- to provide flexible programme structures enabling individuals to take advantage of a wide range of learning situations thereby increasing potential for participation at postgraduate level;

Educational aims of the postgraduate modular scheme

The educational aims of the Faculty of Art, Media and Design postgraduate modular scheme are as follows

- to recognise the acquisition of knowledge and understanding, conceptual clarity, creativity, innovation and originality as being key characteristics of postgraduate level art, media and design practice.
- to support the development of creative, original and intelligent work in Media, the fine and applied arts, design and visual culture;
- to provide students with the necessary knowledge and understanding, intellectual, practical, transferable and subject specific skills to pursue programmes of study at advanced level;
- to enable individuals to consolidate and build on previous academic experience thereby further preparing themselves for work or further study.

Educational Aims: PG Dip MA Animation

- **to give students the creative, conceptual, technical and professional skills necessary to work in the animation or associated digital/new media production industries;**

This programme of study links individual creative development with the understanding of the professional workplace. Building on the excellent relationship that currently exists between the Bristol School of Animation short course unit and local media companies the MA Animation programme allows for extended periods of creative exploration alongside an increased understanding of contemporary professional practice.

- **to provide a programme of study at postgraduate level that can exploit the unique position of Bristol as second 'Media City' in the UK;**

The School of Creative Arts has a history of excellence in running postgraduate short courses in animation providing opportunities for staff development and research for practitioners working in FE, HE and within the media production industries. These courses have been developed with the support of a range of production companies both within the region and nationally. The MA has built upon these relationships to provide a programme that promotes the synthesis of professional application with creative innovation.

- **to develop a coherent programme of study that combines contextual knowledge and critical reflection with the effective development of a methodology based upon an understanding of pre-production, production and post production;**

The programme of study (see below) uses the 'film' as a vehicle for the teaching of the research

skills, processes, techniques and strategies necessary for the development, realisation and dissemination of an animated centred project. This project, together with the critical analysis and evaluation of the outcome, form the two major components of the final assessment for MA.

- **to provide a structure that enables students from a range of art, design and media backgrounds to become specialist animators;**

It is the intention of the course team to recruit students from a range of media, illustration, fine art, and design backgrounds who demonstrate sufficient aptitude and understanding to develop animation as a specialist practice. A proportion of undergraduate animators study animation as part of a broader subject learning experience, e.g. graphic design, illustration or media practice, and are looking for opportunities to develop as specialists.

- **to enable individuals to consolidate and build on previous academic experience thereby preparing themselves for work or further study.**

The parallel structure of discrete pathways combined with the introductory module allows for students with different undergraduate experiences to enter a specialist animation programme. Depending on previous experience and interests, students may elect to take one module in another parallel route subject to negotiation with staff.

- **to enable students to understand the relationship between contextual knowledge and understanding and the development of individual creative practice.**

This programme of study, in keeping with all programmes in the postgraduate scheme, advocates contextual understanding and knowledge as being critical to the development of reflective creative practice. At each stage of the programme, students are required to provide a contextual, critical analysis of their practice in relation to a range of appropriate contemporary, historical, cultural, social and professional reference points. As students enter the final stages of the programme, this contextualisation should also demonstrate an understanding of their position in relation to professional destination and/or further study/research.

- **to build on the experimental, innovative and exploratory approaches to media production developed in BA (Hons) Media Practice;**

This well-established undergraduate programme adopts a unique approach to the exploration of narrative through traditional and new media. The postgraduate programmes in Media recognise a range of discrete approaches at the same time as creating an environment in which interdisciplinary practice may occur. This structure builds on the philosophy of collaborative interdisciplinary practice developed in the undergraduate programme.

Section 3: Learning outcomes of the programme

| A Knowledge and understanding of: | Teaching/learning methods and strategies: |
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| <p><i>The award route provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding, qualities, skills and other attributes in the following areas:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) artworks, artefacts, films, and texts relevant to the development of knowledge and understanding of historical and contemporary practice in animation and related disciplines (ie short films); ii) relevant methodologies and research methods together with knowledge of relevant databases, archives, journals and key texts; iii) knowledge and understanding of key processes and practices employed in the production of animated films. iv) professional practice relative to the animation and media production industries. v) the major theories and debates that contribute to the understanding of 'animation' as a creative, critical and reflective practice. | <p>i) - During the introductory module, students will be introduced to a broad range of practices and practitioners of particular relevance to the development of the specialism. This introduction will be built on throughout the programme through screenings, seminars and student presentations.</p> <p>ii) – The introductory module familiarises students with a range of research tools and methodologies. Short projects are set encouraging students to access a range of sources and to familiarise themselves with key texts, archives, databases, websites etc.</p> <p>iii) – iv) – The programme is structured to ensure the sequential development of the knowledge and practical experience necessary for film production. Professional practice is reflected throughout the programme and encourages students to develop those skills and strategies used in professional animation.</p> <p>v) - In module two – 'Research Methodologies in Visual Culture' students will be introduced to a broader range of theoretical debates and methodological issues which have been developed in relation to modern culture and which continues to impact upon art, media and design practice. Lectures, seminars and tutorials test and support the understanding of contextual knowledge. The introductory module also introduces a range of research skills and workshops thus enabling students to access sources and information necessary to the development of their knowledge and understanding.</p> <p>Assessment:</p> <p>1) Students will make presentations as part of the assessment of modules one and three. Additionally, successful completion of "Research Methodologies in Visual Culture" is dependent on the submission of a 4,000 word essay. Students will also make critical, contextual evaluations (minimum 3,000 words) of their practice in modules two and four. The final 'module' combines reflective, critical and contextual understanding with the development of practice. Students are required to produce a project evaluation of not less than 6,000 words.</p> <p>All learning outcomes are tested in the final</p> |

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| | submission of a short animated film and the analysis and the understanding of that film. Key individuals from the local media industry will be invited to attend final student presentations and to offer final advice and feedback. |
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| <p>B Intellectual Skills</p> <p>Students will learn to;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) analyse new and/or abstract ideas and information; ii) with minimum guidance use ideas and concepts to inform the development of creative practice; iii) evaluate and argue alternative approaches through the development and evaluation of a body of work; iv) consider the relevance of a proposal in relation to personal and professional development; v) accurately assess and evaluate their own work and that of others. vi) synthesise material drawn from a wide range of sources. vii) recognise potential for creativity and innovation through the animated interpretation of a narrative. | <p>Teaching/learning methods and strategies</p> <p>i-iv) Students develop appropriate critical terminology and practice presentation and discussion skills throughout the programme through seminar discussions, tutorials, directed and self directed study. Peer group learning and presentations of individual project work enables students to present, test, modify and argue their point of view. Such presentations also invites critical evaluation of a peer group working to achieve the same level of knowledge and intellectual skill through personally negotiated projects.</p> <p>vi-vii) all work is project based. The project is designed to encourage the implementation of a methodology that recognises research, development, realisation and dissemination as its key components. Students develop skills in each component as they progress through the course. Independent study encourages students to explore their creativity and imagination through the medium of video/film.</p> <p>Assessment</p> <p>i) – vii) Intellectual skills are assessed through the presentation of practical work and the evaluation of that work (the level of progress, application of strategy, influence of key practitioners and the synthesis of knowledge into the work). The relationship between the critical evaluation and the development of the practice is central to the assessment process. Presentations test the conviction and integrity of concepts and strategies as well as encouraging students to actively engage in debate about meaning, relevance and audience.</p> |
|---|---|

| C Subject/Professional/Practical Skills - able to: | Teaching/learning methods and strategies |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) research, develop and present a short film proposal that demonstrates acquisition of appropriate skills together with an understanding of the genre, the potential audience and the market; ii) produce, edit and disseminate a short film thereby incorporating appropriate technical, creative, conceptual and professional skills; iii) demonstrate and exploit the potential of the medium as a means of interpretation; iv) access and utilise a range of resources and facilities necessary for the successful completion of the work in such a way as to demonstrate the creative potential of those resources; v) show how subject knowledge and understanding has influenced the development and treatment of the proposal; vi) present work within formats appropriate to the narrative demonstrating an understanding of film form and visual style; vii) demonstrate knowledge of professional protocol relevant to the animation and media production industries. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i-ii) -the structure of the programme is fundamental to the development of subject/professional and practical skills. The 'short film' is used as the vehicle for the teaching and learning of concepts and skills necessary for the research, development and realisation of an animated film. Broader subject knowledge is introduced through lectures, seminars and student presentations. Student support work will demonstrate the extent to which knowledge and understanding has influenced the development of their proposals (4). iii) - students develop ideas for animation during the second module. Practical experimentation and independent research encourages students to develop the necessary confidence to make innovative and imaginative use of the medium. iv) - students access resources and facilities through workshops used to introduce the skills and knowledge necessary to achieve 1 and 2. Research methods form part of the induction programme (see Appendix). Assessment, tutorial and critiques encourage students to explore format in relation to subject and audience. v) - student-led seminars and presentations encourage students to report on their research and to learn from the work of other practitioners. Tutorials and lectures introduce concepts and practices from which students are expected to develop their own interpretations. vi) vii) - The curriculum (see Structure) is designed to promote creative animation practice as a process of 'pre-production', 'production', post-production' and 'dissemination'. This structure ensures the introduction of appropriate skills as students progress through the course. <p>Assessment</p> <p>i - vi are assessed through the submission of practical work including evidence of research and development (sketchbooks, storyboards, treatment samples etc). The support work is important in showing the extent to which ideas have been tested and explored before being committed to production. Critical evaluations test the students ability to reflect on the development of their practice and demonstrate the depth and breadth of their contextual and critical understanding. vii - In the final module, students are expected to put forward strategies for the dissemination of their film and to take part in a public screening.</p> |

| D Transferable skills and other attributes | Teaching/learning methods and strategies |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) can deploy and adapt skills to meet the demands of a range of sometimes unpredictable or unexpected situation; ii) is able to demonstrate the means by which self reflection on their own work and that of others can improve performance; iii) is confident and autonomous in problem solving; iv) can engage confidently in debate in a professional manner and produce detailed and coherent project reports; v) is able to negotiate confidently in a range of situations; vi) sustain the management of a project and to communicate the findings of that project through appropriate dissemination channels. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) - is developed through engagement with the programme of study. The willingness to gain new skills and apply them to a range of tasks both directed and self-directed. ii) - is developed through seminars and critiques. The diversity of the student group requires individuals to consider the different educational profiles of the group in relation to the development of specialist animation skills. iii) and v) - students are expected to undertake a proportion of self-directed independent study. At various points students will need to negotiate independent access to facilities according to the nature of their project work. i) – vi) - students will already demonstrate the ability to develop these skills in order to enter the course, the extent to which they further enhance their creative independence, confidence and ability to manage will depend on the skills and abilities of individuals. The peer group will be critical to the development and testing of these skills. <p>Assessment</p> <p>i) – vi) - All skills are assessed through the evidence of research, development, realisation, evaluation and dissemination evident in the body of practical work presented for assessment. Critical evaluation further tests the ability of students to progress independently and to deploy and adapt appropriate skills in the realisation of their work. The impact of individual contributions to the development of others will not be formally assessed unless students are working collaboratively.</p> |

Section 4: Programme structure

4.1 Introduction

The programme is structured around the research, production, post production, evaluation and dissemination of a short animated film. The stages of the course equate to the different types of activity required in the making of an animated film. Therefore the first stage, PG Cert, is broadly concerned with the development and presentation of ideas and the selection of a theme/topic/narrative for production. The second stage, PG Diploma is concerned with the production process. During this stage of the programme students engage with the treatment and production of their films. At this point students may elect to collaborate in which case clearly defined roles are negotiated within the remit of the module learning outcomes. At the end of this stage students must present 'rushes' which demonstrate the intended treatment (including sound) to go forward into post-production.

The final stage of the programme demands that students complete their films to a standard acceptable for public screening. At this stage students are also required to make a critical evaluation of their work defining the technical, cultural, critical, historical, professional and practical considerations that have informed the development of their work. This evaluation must also include a summary of the strategies they would put into place to disseminate their work to a wider public audience.

4.2 Interim award requirements

4.2.1 Postgraduate Certificate in Media (Animation)

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| Induction | 00 credits |
| Introduction to Animation | 30 credits |
| Pre-production for animation | 30 credits |

4.2.2 Postgraduate Diploma in (Animation)

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|---|------------|
| Production for Animation | 30 credits |
| Research Methodologies in Visual Culture or Research Methods or Enterprise in the Creative Industries | 30 credits |

4.2.3 Master of Arts in Media (Animation)

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| Post-production for Animation and evaluation | 60 credits |
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4.3 Module diet, including compulsory/core/optional modules

4.3.1 Postgraduate Certificate in Media (Animation)

Students take one of the following

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| Introduction to Animation (optional) | 30 credits |
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plus

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| Pre-production for Animation (core) | |
| PG Cert – total credits | 60 credits |

4.3.2 Postgraduate Diploma in Media (Animation)

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|---|------------|
| Production for Animation | 30 credits |
| Research Methodologies in Visual Culture or Research Methods or Enterprise in the Creative Industries | 30 credits |

PG Dip – total credits 120 credits

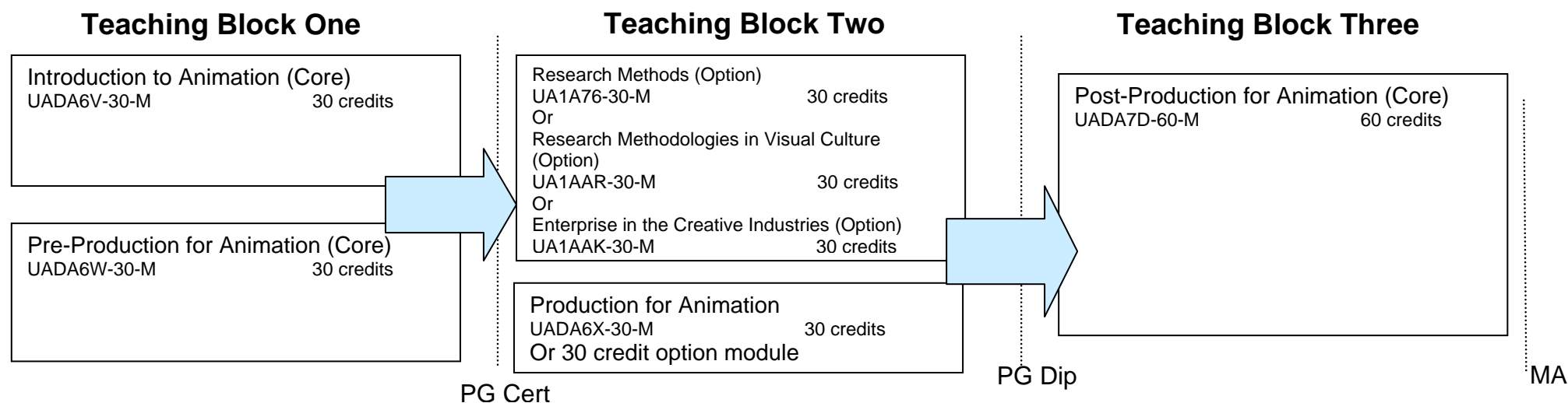
4.3.3 Master of Arts in Media (Animation)

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|--------------------------------------|------------|
| Post-production for Animation (core) | 60 credits |
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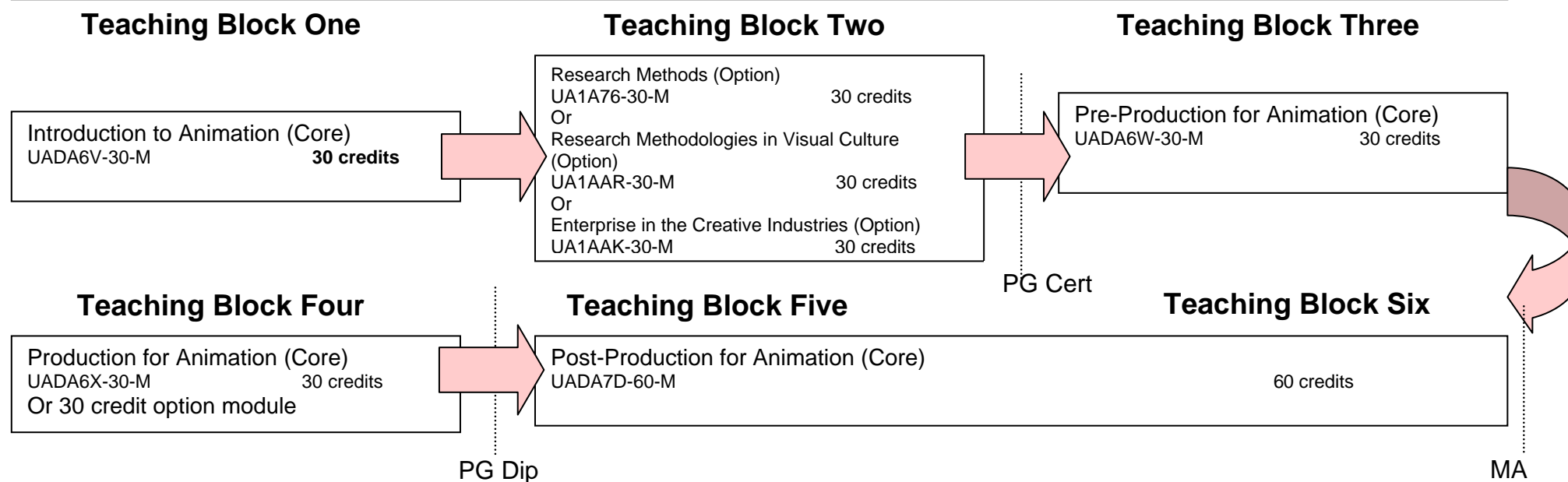
MA - total credits 180 credits

MA Animation

FULL-TIME (3 TEACHING BLOCKS) 18 MONTHS



PART-TIME (6 TEACHING BLOCKS) 36 MONTHS



Section 5: Entry requirements

Criteria and Procedures for Admissions

The pathway in MA Animation will seek to recruit students who can demonstrate exceptional ability and commitment to the development of their creative practice in Animation. All students will normally be expected to have a good undergraduate degree (2:1 or above) and to have taken units or course components at undergraduate level through which they can demonstrate expertise in 'animating'.

All applicants will be interviewed as long as their application indicates that they have had sufficient prior experience. The pathway cannot recruit students with no prior experience of animation. Applicants will be expected to bring a showreel of their animation together with a portfolio of creative work to the interview. The interview will focus on the applicant's interest in animation and their understanding of the demands of an MA programme.

The programme will be taught in English and all students will be expected to have obtained an appropriate level of English literacy and comprehension (TOEFL 6.5 or above). The programme places emphasis on an understanding of research and methodology in relation to creative practice and the contextualisation of such a practice within the production process. The programme is demanding in its requirements at each stage and all applicants will be expected to demonstrate that they are both capable and willing to fulfill the demands of the pathway.

Section 6: Assessment Regulations

a) **MAR**

Regulations are wholly in accordance with MAR

Section 7: Student learning: distinctive features and support

7.1 The programme structure

The MA pathway in Animation has been specifically designed to reflect three identified production components: Pre-production, Production and Postproduction. This structure, and its parallel development within the MA postgraduate scheme represents the underlying strategy for the development and understanding of creative practice in the field of Media.

Depending on past, previous experience, students may elect to undertake an introductory module in either interactive, animation, sound or screenwriting before entering a discrete route in their chosen subject discipline. It is anticipated that the sharing of modules within a coherent, parallel structure will enable students to collaborate across disciplines as and when appropriate.

The structure of the pathway, together with its relationship to pathways in cognate disciplines is distinctive in recognising the inter-disciplinary approaches that some students may adopt. Whilst it is impossible to predict how the pathways may develop, experience at undergraduate and postgraduate level has shown that by creating the potential for collaboration and inter-disciplinary practice, students gain greater insight into the workings of the media production industry.

7.2 Introductory modules (see attached diagram). The introductory modules to all the Media pathways lay out the parameters for practice in the chosen discipline at the same time as offering practical workshops, seminars and lectures. Given the diversity of undergraduate experience, students may opt to take an introductory module in a different discipline to the one they wish to specialise in i.e. a specialist animator may choose to take an introductory module in sound production depending on the nature of their previous experience.

The introductory module will use key texts to introduce a range of narrative structures and strategies. Students will explore the application of linear, non-linear and interactive structures through a series of screenings and seminars.

The introductory module will use key texts to introduce a range of narrative structures and strategies.

Introductory modules will share components with other MA Media pathways eg: Screenwriting, Interactive and Sound Production.

- 7.3 'Pre-production' will focus on the development, research and documentation of content. Students will be expected to research and develop a narrative proposal through the exploration of a range of different ideas and applications. This section of the programme will focus at the development and representation of narrative and structure. Screenings and seminars will introduce key practitioners building on the work undertaken in the introductory module. Through a series of short projects and practical exercises students will learn how to present information in storyboard format in such a way as to compile a usable and understandable indication of their creative intention.

The pre-production stage of the programme, which culminates in the PGCert, will demand that students present/pitch their ideas to a selected panel to include external advisors.

- 7.4 'Production' will focus on the development and production of a short animated film based on the work undertaken in the 'Pre-production' stage of the programme. Additional workshops in production techniques will be developed, according to the perceived needs of the student group. Students will be expected to work in either 2D or 3D. At this stage of the programme students may elect to collaborate and form production teams.

Screenings, seminars and individual tutorials will focus on the way in which different techniques have been applied to the production of short films, including 'live action'. Guest speakers will present and discuss their work and describe in detail the particular process of pre-production, production and post-production they have employed.

- 7.5 'Post Production' will enable students to complete and post produce the work completed during the 'Production/ PGCert stage' of the programme. Individual student presentations, tutorials and seminars will support the preparation of animated films for a public screening. The final presentations will be made to a combined audience of academic staff and representatives from the animation industry.

All students will provide a critical evaluation of their work providing both a creative and professional contextualisation of their work.. The professional contextualisation will include a dissemination strategy outlining plans for the forthcoming 12 months.

- 7.6 In building on a structure that is based on the understanding of a methodology, students will be introduced to the practical, critical and conceptual issues relevant to each stage of the production process.

- 7.7 The proposal is supported by the Bristol Animation Steering Group who have been involved with the Faculty in the development of specialist provision since 1999. AMD is the only University Faculty in the UK to receive specialist ETNA/ CARTOON funding to support the provision of specialist animation 'training' courses for Art Media and Design graduates. This programme has been developed in response to the demands of both graduates and industry in looking for a postgraduate educational experience which recognises the need for undergraduates to develop and contextualise their practice with adequate knowledge of professional practice.

The 'Bristol Animation Festival' 2002 will include contributions from AMD graduates together with masterclasses and 'drop in' facilities organised by this faculty. The validation of MA Animation will formalise the work already going on within the faculty as well as allowing potential students to take advantage of the unique opportunities this Faculty can offer.

Section 8 Reference points/benchmarks

8.1 Subject benchmarks (QAA Unit)
QAA Unit: Art & Design
Subject benchmarks: Art & Design

8.2 Relationship to University learning and teaching policies

8.2.1 This proposal encourages links between staff research projects and teaching and learning. Projects relating to digital curation will feed into the programme. In time it is hoped that NEVAC (National Electronic and Video Archives of the Crafts) will expand to include: (for further information on staff research see Supplementary Information (section 4)).

8.3 Employer interaction/feedback

8.3.1 This proposal has benefited from input from individual members of the Bristol Animation Steering Group. This group was initially convened to support the Animation Training Scheme (The Bristol Animation Courses), which have been run by this Faculty since 1999. The steering group, (see Section – Supplementary Information) have considered the proposal and debated the inclusion of key components into the programme of study. The importance of such input must be considered in light of the tensions that are known to exist between the Media/Animation Production Industries and 'Education'. It is hoped that in bringing together the strengths of the Art, Media and Design Faculty with those of the industry and in recognising the important role that each has to play, we are proposing a master's programme that has the potential to embrace both academic independence and professional integrity. At a time when the demand for intelligent, academic content has never been greater, great benefit can arise from a programme that recognises the value of innovative and creative animation that is conceived within a professional commercial context. The input from both the steering group and advice from the European Training in Animation Network (ETNA) has helped to shape the overall structure of the programme and identify baseline skills within the three broad areas of 'Pre-production', 'Production' and 'Post Production'.

The Faculty of Art, Media and Design is the only UK University to receive CARTOON funding for the development and delivery of professional training in Animation.

8.3.2 This input from the industry, comprising of both Bristol-based and London-based animators is viewed within the context of the Faculties overarching postgraduate modular scheme. Students will share a common module with students from across the Faculty introducing key issues and approaches. Students studying in the field of Media benefit from the teaching expertise of narrative structure, film language and analysis developed within MA European Cinema and Film and BA (Hons) Media Practice. The Viewing list given in appendix i (Section Two, Module Specification – MA Animation) is intended to guide students towards a wide range of approaches to historical and contemporary animation practices as well as introducing different genres and concepts.

